

Recently, we at MAD launched an attempt to rescue at least a few of our readers from a lifetime of vagrancy by offering our own series of free "Famous"-type Correspondence Courses. Based on the results so far, we're either too dumb to teach . . . or you're too dumb to learn. Because we haven't

MAD'S FAMOUS DEPARTMENT

ARTIST: JACK RICKARD

LESSON ONE CREATING YOUR SALESPERSON IMAGE



Having reached the decision to exchange your drab civvies for the proud plumage of a Career Department Store Clerk, you will want to begin work immediately on creating an image of haughty contempt that will prevent even the most aggressive shopper from daring to approach you.

A wardrobe that suggests you are more affluent and well bred than your customers can do much to put them in their places and silence their whining demands. Unfortunately, your Salespersoning salary will make it impossible for you to dress as if you were more affluent than anybody. Still, many Female Clerks have found that this obstacle to Snob Image Building is easily overcome when they select expensive dress styles in inexpensive fabrics, and then douse themselves with so much cheap perfume that no one can get close enough to feel the material. For the Male Clerk, the same impression of proud grandeur can be created by inserting a fake carnation in the button-hole of a smartly styled forty-dollar rayon suit.

Though such aids as regal attire and overpowering stench should enable you to fend off bothersome shoppers on most occasions, even more evidence of your aloof su-

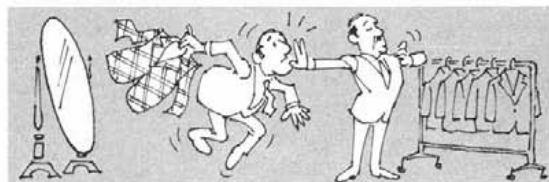
periority may be needed to squelch their boorish enthusiasm during bargain sales. At such times, a carefully developed phony British accent is helpful in convincing customers that their childish whimpering for service is not worthy of your attention.

Many all-time greats in Professional Salespersoning have also utilized nose glasses to enhance their stern glare as a fear-inspiring technique. Even minor props, such as a small gold pencil attached to the female clothing by a delicate chain, or pearl grey spats worn by the male, can rekindle a customer's terrifying childhood memories of inferiority and cause him to flee empty handed.

In the final analysis, however, any sure fire display of utter contempt must come from strong feelings within the student. These are best developed by seeing the customer as the helpless, insecure wretch he really is, bent only on buying (or charging) your time, assistance, love and approval. Withhold these tokens of affection from him and he can be counted on to skulk away in defeat, leaving you free to pursue your chosen career in peace and quiet.



WRONG



RIGHT

LESSON ONE QUIZ

1. A well dressed Female Clerk should never wear: **A** Clothing that differs in color from the wall she is trying to hide against; **B** A Smile Button, except upside down; **C** Any identification to indicate that she works in the store.
2. Public eagerness to buy Bargain Specials will be dampened if you place them: **A** In a locked case under the \$200 table cloths; **B** On a rack marked: "Discontinued Styles in Portly Sizes Only;" **C** In another department six floors away.
3. A nice way to let racial minorities know you don't want

- their business is to: **A** Hurriedly dust off any merchandise they may have touched; **B** Hurriedly turn the shoplifter detection camera on them; **C** Hurriedly inform them that servants' uniforms are in the basement.
4. As the morning rush of shoppers streams in, repeat the Arrogant Salesperson's Pledge to: **A** Sharpen a dozen pencils every day before starting work; **B** Hunt for your order book until lunch time; **C** Change the cash register tape as soon as enough customers are waiting.

CONGRATULATIONS! You're already showing a Clerk's talent for giving wrong answers since none of the above choices is correct.

heard about anybody landing a job after taking one of our courses. However, we remain undaunted as we now present Number Three in this series of rare opportunities to let your natural flair for slothful incompetence carry you to fame and fortune in another exciting career as you undertake

NT STORE CLERKS' COURSE

WRITER: TOM KOCH

LESSON TWO SHOPPER MANIPULATION TECHNIQUES



Even the student who has been endowed by nature with the gift of a totally obnoxious personality must face the fact that there will be occasional busy days when a few customers must be waited on. Such unavoidable confrontations will be less sickening if you develop the knack of picking out those peasants across the counter who appear most docile and easily browbeaten.

Veteran Salespeople agree that the ideal shopper to select for painless disposal is the panicky male who is frantically waving cash to signify his urgent desire to make a fast purchase and escape. These miserable specimens are completely untrained in the skills of hand-to-hand department store combat, and will gratefully buy anything at any price.

In sharp contrast, the Female Browser is far more difficult to dehumanize, and should be confronted only by Rookie Clerks whose sadistic tendencies already have been well developed in other fields. Female Browsers may even go so far as to challenge your right to select the size, style and color of merchandise that you find most convenient to sell. When such displays of customer insolence

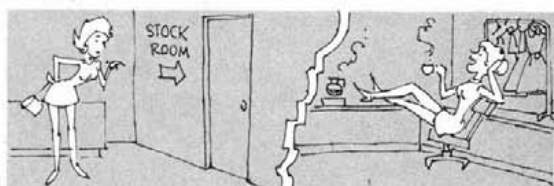
occur, you must be prepared to deal with them harshly and quickly. Remember that permitting your authority to be undermined even once can open the floodgates to future demands for gift wrapping, careful packing of breakables and similar services that are all beneath your dignity.

One good technique for punishing uppity shoppers is to make a 45-minute trip to the stockroom in search of a requested item, taking care to keep the customer's charge plate with you so she will have to wait for your return. Also recommended is the ploy of involving yourself in so much paperwork to write up a delivery order that the buyer will be reduced to begging for cash and carry terms. A nice final crusher after the transaction has been indelibly completed is to mention that the newly purchased item was scheduled to go on sale for half price tomorrow.

Practice these mean, rotten methods of shopper destruction until they come easily and naturally. You will find that they not only make Salespersoning a barrel of fun, but more important, they do much to prevent regular customers from bothering you for service more than once.



WRONG



RIGHT

LESSON TWO QUIZ

- On approaching a shopper, a good opening remark is: **A** "Can you be helped?" **B** "That'll be ten bucks for the bracelet you just slipped into your pocket." **C** "Shall we go to lunch, or do you want to wait here until I get back?"
- A customer requesting a big red and green Christmas box should be given: **A** A big black and blue bruise; **B** Instructions to go ask the demented psycho who works in the shipping department; **C** Thirty seconds to get out and stay out.
- An embarrassed man gift shopping for ladies' lingerie can

best be helped by: **A** Informing him that you don't cater to weirdos; **B** Loudly asking, "How about something you can see through easier?" **C** Assuming he'll want to try on his selection before you wrap it.

- Customers inquiring about a bargain advertised in the paper must always be told that: **A** They mis-read the ad; **B** They're in the wrong department of the wrong store in the wrong town; **C** Only fools believe what they read in the paper.

NICE WORK! You have just shown the proper attitude by refusing to answer any of our dumb questions.

LESSON THREE

CONQUERING THE MERCHANDISE RETURNER



Having mastered the fundamentals of Shopper Manipulation, the student is now fiendishly prepared to move in for a quick kill when confronted by a customer attempting to exchange or return merchandise.

Merely pause for a moment to observe one of these pathetic creatures clutching his or her unwanted purchase, and it becomes obvious that you will hold all the trump cards when the pleading begins for you to take back the junk in trade for cash, credit or a size that fits. Though your natural impulse will be to issue a flat refusal, this is not only a bush league tactic, but also one that may prompt a few brazen customers to take their case to a higher authority. In big time Salespersoning, it is the mark of a true pro to break the complainer's spirit by employing more devious and humiliating methods.

If the poor slob is unable to produce a sales slip for the item, you can seal his doom with great ease and scorn simply by announcing that the merchandise was either purchased at a competing store or, more likely, shoplifted from this one. Any competent floorwalker will be delighted to back up your wild accusation, thereby leaving

the customer with the unpleasant alternatives of a fast departure or a fast arrest.

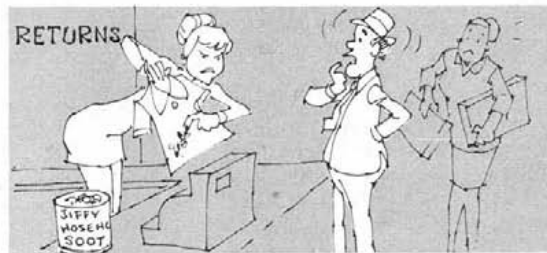
Even when a sales slip is offered as flimsy evidence of a shopper's honesty, you can still retain a strong upper hand, if you will remember to keep one finger smudged with cruddy gook at all times. This finger may then be slyly rubbed across the item as you scream your derision at the customer for trying to return soiled merchandise.

Apparel returners who claim to have been given the wrong size are also a cinch to humiliate, once you get the hang of it. Merely entice them to try on the garment, and then berate them for not knowing that the "loose drape" (or "snug hug") is in style this season, thus making all the rest of their wardrobe obsolete.

Throughout all such confrontations, you can add a further note of discouragement by implying that the customer is in for several hours of filling out forms, waiting in long lines and undergoing interrogation if he insists on trying to get his money back. This often prompts him to accept defeat willingly, without ever realizing that you are the only one who really would have been inconvenienced.



WRONG



RIGHT

LESSON THREE QUIZ

1. A customer attempting to return a fur coat should be informed that: **A** It didn't have fleas when it was purchased; **B** It can only be exchanged for items of equal value, such as 14,000 shoe laces; **C** Veterinarians don't accept dead animals, and neither do you. _____
2. A slight smirk is acceptable when telling a Merchandise Returner that: **A** Only an idiot would have selected that style in the first place; **B** Exchanges are only made at your main store in Nome, Alaska; **C** His check bounced, so he owes you the returned item plus \$39.50. _____

3. Anyone insisting that a garment is the wrong size must be told that: **A** There are no wrong size clothes, only wrong size people; **B** The only mistake on the tag is that the price was marked too low; **C** You're not responsible for customers who get wet and shrink. _____
4. Study sales slips accompanying returned items carefully so the customer will assume that: **A** You're memorizing his address for future retaliation; **B** You're a forged document expert; **C** You're stalling for time until the store detective gets there. _____

LESSON FOUR

EMERGENCY FAWNING PROCEDURES



Despite your understandable eagerness to treat all shoppers with the utter disdain they deserve, you should realize that it will sometimes be profitable to fake a display of cheerful civility. Such occasions can arise when your employer offers cash bonuses to Clerks for foisting an unusually shoddy consignment of merchandise off onto gullible shoppers. To collect your fair share of the loot during these high pressure sales campaigns, you must be skilled in utilizing Emergency Customer Fawning Procedures.

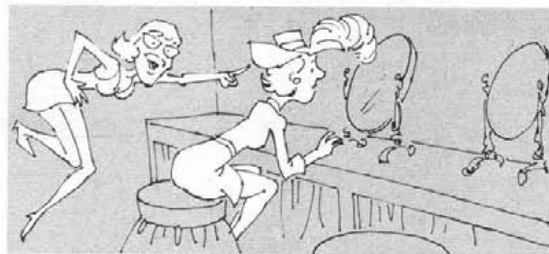
An excellent maneuver of this type consists of racing up to a shopper who shows casual interest in a particularly atrocious item, and letting fire with the recommended squeal: "Oooo, Darling! That creation is *you*!" Though this particular catch phrase is not always successful when uttered by Male Clerks trying to sell power tools, it has been found ideal for unloading junky women's apparel.

The Phony Gush is most effective when it also subtly implants the idea that the Salesperson's fashion taste is far superior to that of the shopper. Make the customer feel humbly grateful for your expert guidance, and she

may well become swept up in an orgy of impulse buying that will both increase your profit and enhance your pleasure as you watch the pigeon making a complete fool of herself.

Point out, for example, that an "exquisite" blue and pink polka dot dress literally cries out for such complementing accessories as orange shoes and a green purse. Even this outlandish recommendation is sure to lead to additional sales if the Rookie Clerk has observed the three basic rules of the Fawning Hustle: (1) Always call the customer "Honey" so she will mistakenly consider you to be a friend who has her best interests at heart; (2) Constantly thumb through a copy of *Vogue* to make the shopper think you are hunting for an article that corroborates the absurd things you're saying; (3) While dispensing "hot fashion tips," try not to giggle.

Undoubtedly, most customers will realize later that they have been victims of a Fawning Hustle, and will try to return the trash you palmed off on them. However, you already have learned in Lesson III how to cope with the Merchandise Returner, so you will be fully prepared to add insult to injury when the time comes.



WRONG



RIGHT

LESSON FOUR QUIZ

- When fawning over a customer, it is always best to avoid:
A Offering her homely child a banana if it will do some tricks; **B** Mentioning that her dress looks like the one you recently gave to the Salvation Army; **C** Discussing possible causes of her bad breath.
- To establish your credibility as a fashion expert: **A** Never wear mismatched gym socks to work; **B** Carefully buckle your galoshes before approaching a customer; **C** Stop referring to Christian Dior as "Christine."
- The only special rule for a Male Clerk fawning over a male

shopper is: **A** Don't overdo it if the guy is wearing pastel leotards and a satin blouse; **B** When you see a pistol under his coat, fawn even harder; **C** Never refer to sporting goods as being "cute" or "stunning!"

- For the fawner, a good flattering conversation opener is:
A "Let me fit you in a nice pup tent for evening wear, Fatso." **B** I couldn't help noticing how natural your dentures look." **C** "How courageous of you to go shopping alone in your condition!"